

“Bells Across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox” on April 9, 2015

For the past four years, the National Park Service and many other organizations and individuals have been commemorating the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War and the continuing efforts for human rights today. On April 9, 1865, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant met Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee to set the terms of surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.



Bell tower at Dover's Old State House. The site's bell will ring at 3:15 p.m. on April 9, 2015 in commemoration of Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865.

In conjunction with a major event at [Appomattox Court House](#)

[National Historical Park](#) in Virginia, the National Park Service and its partners invite communities across the nation to join in this commemoration. The bells will ring first at Appomattox at 3 p.m. on April 9, 2015. The ringing will coincide with the moment the historic meeting between Grant and Lee in the McLean House at Appomattox Court House ended. While Lee's surrender did not end the Civil War, the act is seen by most Americans as the symbolic end of four years of bloodshed.

After the ringing at Appomattox, bells will reverberate across the country. The [First State National Historical Park](#), in collaboration with the [Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), [First State Heritage Park](#), [Lewes Historical Society](#), and the [Old Swedes Foundation](#), is orchestrating bell-ringing at sites across Delaware.

Houses of worship, schools, city halls, public buildings, historic sites, and others are invited to join in the commemoration by ringing their bells at precisely 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2015. Bells should continue ringing for four minutes (each minute symbolic of a year of war).

The end of the Civil War has different meanings for different people. Each organization may customize this idea to its own situation. Participants are asked to ring bells across the nation as a gesture to mark the end of the bloody conflict in which more than 750,000 Americans perished. Some communities may ring their bells in celebration of freedom or a restored Union, others as an expression of mourning and a moment of silence for the fallen. Sites may ring bells to mark the beginning of reconciliation and reconstruction or as the next step in the continuing struggle for civil rights.

Organizations that are interested in participating in the commemoration should contact Jim Yurasek of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs at 302-736-7413 or jim.yurasek@delaware.gov; Sarah Zimmerman of the First State

Heritage Park at 302-739-9194 or Sarah.Zimmerman@delaware.gov; or Jenny Manning of the Lewes Historical Society at 302-645-7670 or jenny@historiclewes.org.

Thus far, the following Delaware organizations have agreed to ring their bells at 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2015: Dover Presbyterian and Wesley United Methodist churches, John Bell House (hand bell), Kent County Courthouse, Legislative Mall's Liberty Bell and The Old State House in Dover; Bethel Methodist, Lewes Presbyterian and St. Peter's Episcopal churches in Lewes; Immanuel Episcopal and New Castle United Methodist churches and the New Castle Court House Museum in New Castle; Old Swedes Church in Wilmington; and the Wyoming United Methodist Church in Wyoming.

Curriculum materials regarding the Civil War and the surrender at Appomattox are available for schools by contacting Ethan McKinley of the First State National Historical Park at 302-544-6363 or Ethan_McKinley@nps.gov.

Participants are also invited to help write the history of this event by tweeting their observations at **#BellsAcrossTheLand2015**. Stories will be compiled in one place to see how each one helps build this national story.

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Contact:

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